

MINUTES
TALBOT COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
5 January 2008

1. ROLL CALL

The regular monthly meeting of the Talbot County Historic Preservation Commission was called to order at 9:35 AM on Monday, 5 January 2009. Those members in attendance were Ms. Peggy Pickall, Chairperson, Mrs. Christine Dayton, Ms. Kathleen Kurtz, Mrs. Kearby Parker, Mr. Eric Lowery and Mr. Robert Arnouts. Mrs. Polly Shannahan was not present. Representing the County was Ms. Florence Ball and Mr. Martin Sokolich. Mr. Jesse Fearins, Assistant County Engineer, attended on behalf of the proposed new elevator for the Talbot County Courthouse.

2. NEW BUSINESS

- A. **PRESERVATION MARYLAND CIRCUIT REPORT ON TCHPC –**
Ms. Peggy Pickall read from a written report from Susan West Montgomery, who visited TCHPC 2 June 2008 to observe how the Commission conducts its meetings, and to review their procedures and written materials as well as the portion of the Talbot County Zoning Ordinance dealing with the Historic Preservation Commission. The report contained three recommendations to MAHDC. One of those recommendations was that MAHDC look at enforcement procedures around the State and make available good examples such as the model which was developed by TCHPC. Another recommendation dealt with best practices for non-traditional incentives and regulations including viewsheds, and viewshed regulations, which is something TCHPC has been addressing. The third recommendation was for MAHDC to prepare an article for a newsletter on historic preservation and conservation easements.

There were several recommendations to TCHPC which were briefly cited by Ms. Peggy Pickall as she read from the letter. However, since the other Commissioners have not yet had a chance to peruse the letter and consider how best to address those recommendations, it was suggested that this topic be tabled until next month's meeting when the Commissioner's will be in a better position to effectively discuss and address the recommendations they deem appropriate for Talbot County. Ms. Peggy Pickall mentioned that one of the recommendations is for TCHPC to write design guidelines instead of completely relying on the Secretary of the Interior Standards. Mrs. Christine Dayton commented that doing so is a huge undertaking, and that the Town of Easton had consultants do theirs. Ms. Pickall said she thinks

TCHPC actually does have guidelines that were done years ago. She suggested consulting the TCHPC reference binder.

- B. COUNTY FEASIBILITY STUDIES FOR TALBOT COURTHOUSE ELEVATOR – Ms. Peggy Pickall led the discussion by asking if the County had a preference regarding one of the four preliminary plans prepared by Davis, Bowen & Friedel, Inc. (Architects). Mr. Jesse Fearins replied that so far, there has not been a recommendation of preference by the County. Mrs. Kearby Parker asked how the new elevator might affect the Old Music Hall. Mr. Fearins replied that the Music Hall will need an exterior stair for egress, should that space ever be used for the public; however, the Music Hall will not be involved at all in the elevator project. In examining the four versions of plans and elevations for the elevator, Ms. Pickall said the Commission's main concern is how the exterior of the courthouse would be affected by the two exterior versions presented. Mr. Robert Arnouts said he felt any exterior additions, especially to the front or rear elevations of the courthouse, will spoil the symmetry of the main structure. Therefore, he opposes the two exterior designs. His preference would be the two interior alternatives. He further stated that a future stair tower addition to accommodate the Music Hall would be less objectionable since that part of the building complex is really not symmetrical to the rest of the complex. Mr. Arnouts further observed that both interior schemes require removal of the existing ramp in the breezeway connection and also the exterior ramp. He asked how does one get to the first floor of that wing once they are removed? Mrs. Christine Dayton said there is a new ramp proposed. Mr. Fearins said modifications to the breezeway ramp so that it complies with ADA specifications would provide access from within the interior of the main courthouse and north wing. Then, for access from the exterior, the ramp between the courthouse and south wing would be modified to accommodate the handicapped, and the objective is to maintain only one entrance into the courthouse because of security. Mrs. Christine Dayton said she favors the second interior version (drawings SC2-1 thru 3) because the layout for the first interior version (drawings SC1-1 thru 3) tends to impose the elevator into space which would make the paths of travel too cramped. Mr. Fearins said he prefers versions 2 and 3, with version 3 being the least intrusive of the exterior versions. He said the problem with the interior versions is dealing with disruption to the courts and relocation of mechanical equipment beneath. It was observed that the estimated costs of the four versions, ranging from \$343,600 to \$483,100, are close. Version SC-2, preferred by TCHPC, is estimated at \$414,900. Mr. Robert Arnouts said if an exterior version were to be preferred by the County, he felt version SC-3, which is an addition to the rear of the courthouse, would be more acceptable since it looks more contemporary, following the approach recommended by Secretary of the Interior Standards, rather than mimicking the style of the historic structure. Most of the Commissioner's concurred. Ms. Peggy Pickall was reluctant to approve either exterior version because she felt any exterior attachment would detract too much from the historic context of the courthouse. At that point she called for a motion.

MOTION – Mr. Robert Arnouts moved to recommend interior version SC-2 as the preferred plan to add the elevator to the courthouse. Mrs. Christine Dayton seconded the motion, and it was carried unanimously.

Ms. Peggy Pickall shall make a written recommendation to submit to the County Council. She will include the rationale supporting the opinion of the Commission.

3. CURRENT BUSINESS

- A. REVIEW OF 1 DECEMBER 2008 MINUTES – The minutes from the meeting on 1 December 2008 were read, and no corrections were noted. *Mrs. Christine Dayton moved to approve the minutes as read. The motion was seconded and carried.*

B. UPDATES ON CURRENT PROJECTS:

1. MAHDC HANDBOOK EXCHANGE –The MAHDC handbook is still being circulated among the Commissioners.
2. DEMOLITION DELAY ORDINANCE – Mr. Robert Arnouts distributed his original unedited draft of the ordinance to the Commissioners. The document has had a first edit by Ms. Florence Ball, and will have additional editing Mr. Martin Sokolich. Once that is done, the edited version will be sent to the Commissioners by email for their review and comment.
3. 925 PORT STREET (T-347) AND THE OLD MUSIC HALL – Ms. Priscilla Morris dropped of the final report this morning at the meeting. Ms. Peggy Pickall asked if it is now ok for Mr. Martin Sokolich to issue the payment for the report, and asked for a motion.

MOTION – Ms. Kathleen Kurtz moved to make payment at this time for the report. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Christine Dayton and was carried unanimously.

4. HISTORIC DISTRICT PLAQUES –Mrs. Kearby Parker displayed the plaque that was made for Longwoods Schoolhouse. The plaque is 4"x15" and is fashioned from zinc. The cost is \$165.70 plus \$13.00 shipping which totals \$178.70. Mrs. Parker said if they are ordered in groups, a discount would be applied. Mrs. Christine Dayton suggested that in the future, the date of the structure as displayed on a plaque should include the letter "c" for circa. Mrs. Parker said she will make sure that is added to instructions to the vendor. She will also take a photograph that can be inserted in the written materials about the plaques to be enclosed with annual letters to the owners of HDO properties. The annual letter which has been edited by Ms. Peggy Pickall, was discussed with suggestions for updating it.

Ms. Kathleen Kurtz suggested Longwoods School for the site visit in January, at which time the plaque could be presented and mounted. A photograph will be taken and submitted with a news release to the Star Democrat. Mrs. Christine Dayton suggested inviting Dirk Bartlett or one of the other County Council members to come out for the presentation. Ms. Peggy Pickall will contact Rick Towles of the Dept. of Parks and Recreation to see how he wants to handle the presentation ceremony. She will email the Commissioners with his response.

5. TCHPC BUDGET – Ms. Peggy Pickall said she is concerned about County cutbacks due to the economy. Ms. Florence Ball suggested writing a letter to the County Council expressing those concerns, and including a summary of projected needs. Mrs. Christine Dayton said the 2009 budget will need to be finalized before June 2009, when the County Council would be reviewing it for approval.

The possibility of using County funds to pay for plaques for existing HDO properties was discussed for inclusion as a budget item. Ms. Kathleen Kurtz said she has reservations about using government funds to pay for plaques that may not be seen by that many people, since most of the HDO properties are remote from public roads. Mr. Martin Sokolich said the survey of Talbot County historic sites should probably be updated. He added that the State is not likely to update it, and that perhaps it would be a good project for an intern. It was mentioned that MHT did the original survey in the 1970's, and updated it in the 1980's.

Ms. Peggy Pickall made a list of things to include in projections for the new budget to include updating the survey of historic sites, TCHPC guidelines project, Old Music Hall, and plaques. Mrs. Kearby Parker recommended taking plaques off the list.

- C. NEXT SITE VISIT – Longwoods School (T-69) Monday, 19 January 2009. The Commissioners will meet at the Acme parking lot in Easton at 9:30 am.

4. OPEN FLOOR

- A. WAVERLY – On 9 December 2008 Ms. Florence Ball notified the Commissioners by email that she received an application for a demolition permit at Waverly. She received responses from only three Commissioners, all of whom recognized that nothing could be done to stop the demolition since no demolition ordinance exists at this time, and the property is not under the protection of an HDO. Since there were no legal grounds to withhold approval, the demolition permit for the original house at Waverly has been processed by the County and has been issued. Demolition could be

imminent. Mr. Eric Lowery said he would be willing to drive out and measure the property and take photos for the archives.

- B. Mrs. Christine Dayton said someone in Bellevue, talking about the County Comprehensive Plan, said a handful of people are trying to figure out if a Historic District can be placed on the village of Bellevue. Mr. Martin Sokolich said it all depends on how ready the entire community is to respond to this possibility. He said Mrs. Jacqueline Green is the official representative for the Bellevue Village Center Board. He suggested notifying her of this inquiry and coordinating contact between the Village Center Board and the interested parties.

NEXT MEETING - Monday, 2 February 2009 at 9:30 am at the Bradley Room in the South Wing of the Courthouse.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 11:05 am.

7 January 2009